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THE NEW YORK TIMES, WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 26, 1980

# Upper Volta's President Is Ousted In Coup by a Military Commander

ABIDJAN, Ivory Coast, Nov. 25 (AP) — A military officer today overthrew the president of the poverty-stricken African nation of Upper Volta, Sangoule Lamizana, who took power in a military coup in 1966, diplomatic sources said here.

Mr. Lamizana, 64 years old, was replaced in the apparently bloodless coup by a group calling itself the Military Committee of Recovery for National Progress, led by Col. Saye Zerbo, a former foreign minister and the commander of armed forces in Ouagadougou, the capital, the sources said.

The fate of Mr. Lamizana was not known. He was believed to have been in Ouagadougou at the time of the coup. As president, he had returned the country of 6 million people to civilian rule and encouraged democratic procedures. He won one of Africa's few contested presidential elections in 1978.

Upper Volta, a sub-Saharan nation with a population largely of subsistence farmers, has been one of the nations hardest hit by the long drought in the region. A landlocked country, it is surrounded by Mali, Niger, the Ivory Coast, Ghana, Togo and Benin. It gained independence from France in 1960.

The coup in Upper Volta was the second by military leaders in an African country in two weeks. President Luis de Almeida Cabral of Guinea-Bissau was ousted Nov. 14 and João Bernardo Vieira, the military hero of the country's 13-year-long guerrilla war for independence from Portugal, took over.

In a radio broadcast, Colonel Zerbo said that all individual and collective freedoms, except that of political activity, would be guaranteed and that international agreements would be respected.

He said the coup had been necessary because of the political and economic situation of the country, as shown by the poor labor climate and poor performance in all sectors.

Upper Volta has been troubled for the last two months by a strike of teachers seeking not only improved conditions but also a change of government, according to information reaching here. The strike was suspended last Saturday in an apparent conciliatory move, although the unions involved said that their demands stood.

Colonel Zerbo, who was foreign minister under President Lamizana from 1974 to 1976, was chief of the research bureau of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in addition to being commander of the capital's armed forces.

Mr. Lamizana had returned the nation to civilian administration gradually after he took office. He allowed political parties for the first time in 1977.

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